

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 13307

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI VS

SUBJ: MR 1 CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW FOR PERIOD
JULY 15-21, 1973

HEREWITH REPEAT OF AMCONSUL DANANG MESSAGE 0938 FOR YOUR
ACTION/INFO QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 0938

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI VS

SUBJ: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW FOR PERIOD
JULY 15 - JULY 21, 1973

SUMMARY: GVN OFFICIALS IN MR I TOOK STEPS TO STABILIZE RICE
PRICES AND ASSURE ADEQUATE STOCKS FOR SALE. REGION RESERVE
STOCKS WERE RELEASED AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES BEGAN IMPLEMENTING SOME
CONTROLS AND ORDERED PUBLIC NOTICE OF BASE PRICES. THE LEVEL OF
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MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS LOW. PART OF IT WAS ACCOUNTED FOR IN
CLASHES (ENGAGEMENTS NOT ATTRIBUTED BY THE GVN TO PRG/NVA
VIOLATIONS). THE MAJORITY OF SUCH CLASHES ARE PROBABLY TRIGGERED
DURING GVN EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP BASE AREAS AT THE CORPS COMMANDER'S

DIRECTIVE. THE COMMANDER OF THE 3RD ARVN DIVISION IS CONSIDERING SETTING UP MILITARY PRODUCTION PLOTS WHERE HIS TROOPS CAN GROW RICE TO SUPPLEMENT WHAT THEIR GVN MONETARY RICE ALLOTMENT CAN BUY. THE ICCS INDODEL IN REGION I IS READY TO DEPLOY CONDITIONALLY TO GIO LINH PORT OF ENTRY WITH THE POLDEL AND HUNGDEL AND IRON OUT REMAINING ISSUES WITH THE PRG LATER. WITH ONLY CANDEL NOW OPPOSING DEPLOYMENT;; IT WILL PROBABLY OCCUR AFTER THEIR IMMINENT DEPARTURE FROM VIETNAM. GVN AND PRG/NVA TROOPS APPEAR TO HAVE SETTLED DOWN INTO AT LEAST A TEMPORARY TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE IN THE SONG VE VALLEY OF QUANG NGAI. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ECONOMY: PRICE STABILITY

GVN OFFICIALS IN DANANG AND HUE HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO ARREST THE RISE OF RICE PRICES AND ASSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF RICE FOR SALE. LTG TRUONG AND REGION OFFICIALS ARRANGED FOR THE RELEASE OF RESERVE STOCKS TO HUE, WHERE THE VALUE ADDED TAX HAD TOUCHED OFF PANIC BUYING, WHICH HAD DRIVEN THE PRICE OF RICE UP BY 20 PERCENT DURING THE PAST TEN DAYS AND HAD DEPLETED STOCKS. MAYOR TIN IN DANANG ORDERED THE RELEASE OF 600 TONS OF RESERVES TO BE SOLD AT ANNOUNCED PRICES AND LOCATIONS IN LIMITED AMOUNTS TO EACH FAMILY. TIN HAS ALSO PUBLISHED ANNOUNCEMENTS FIXING THE PRICE OF RICE BROUGHT UP TO MR I IN EACH TRADING COMPANY SHIPMENT IDENTIFYING THE DECLARED PRICE, THE VALUE ADDED TAX, THE 3 PERCENT PROFIT, THE TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES AND THE FINAL FIXED PRICE. THE PROVINCE CHIEF IN HUE ON JULY 17 ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO IMPLEMENT PRICE CONTROLS, INCLUDING ENFORCING A REQUIREMENT FOR RETAILERS TO POST BASE PRICE LISTS. THERE IS SOME INDICATION IN DANANG, HOWEVER, THAT RICE MERCHANTS ARE RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES ABOUT ANNOUNCED PRICES BY CLAIMING THEY HAVE NONE TO SELL.

2. MILITARY SITUATION:

THE LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS LOW, THOUGH SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE PREVIOUS WEEK. CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS REPORTED AT I CORPS HEADQUARTERS AVERAGED NEARLY EIGHT PER DAY. GVN ARTILLERY FIRE REMAINED AT A LOW LEVEL, WITH JUST ONE FLURRY OF 65 ROUNDS NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS. IN HIS
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COMMAND GUIDELINES TO DIVISION AND PROVINCE SECTOR COMMANDERS, I CORPS COMMANDING GENERAL, LTG TRUONG HAS EMPHASIZED THE CRITICAL PRIORITY HE PLACES ON ELIMINATING ENEMY BASE AREAS IN THE LOWLANDS. THE REPORTED CLASHES (ENGAGEMENTS NOT ATTRIBUTED TO PRG/NVA CEASEFIRE VIOLATION BY THE GVN) BETWEEN TERRITORIAL FORCES AND PRG/NVA UNITS IN QUANG NGAI AND QUANG NAM HAVE CONSTITUTED A SIGNIFICANT PART OF OVERALL MILITARY ACTIVITY.

PROBABLY THE MAJORITY OF SUCH CLASHES HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED DURING GVN EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP BASE AREAS.

3. MORALE OF GVN TROOPS: 3RD ARVN DIVISION

BRIGADIER GENERAL NGUYEN DUY HINH, CG OF 3RD ARVN DIVISION,

ALTHOUGH PROUD OF HIS DIVISION'S PERFORMANCE IN CLEARING GO NOI ISLAND (AT950540 - BT040540) AND "THE ARIZONA TERRITORY" (AT913 533-AT820540-AT810460), AS WELL AS OTHER AREAS IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE (REF DANANG A-37), IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT ON MORALE OF THE SUBSTITUTION OF A MONEY ALLOWANCE IN LIEU OF RICE TO HIS TROOPS. IN CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR, RRO, ON JULY 20, HINH NOTED THAT INCREASING PRICES HAVE REDUCED THE VALUE OF THE MONETARY ALLOTMENT. NOW HIS TROOPS ARE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE ENOUGH RICE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES. HINH IS CONSIDERING ESTABLISHING MILITARY PRODUCTION AREAS WHERE TROOPS CAN GROW CROPS TO SUPPLEMENT WHAT CAN BE BOUGHT WITH THEIR GVN ALLOTMENT. PERHAPS BORROWED FROM THE EXAMPLE SET BY PRG TROOPS IN THE "OTHER MR I", HINH'S SOLDIER-FARMERS IDEA IS A REFRESHINGLY NOVEL SUGGESTION ON THE GVN SIDE FOR ALLEVIATING A SERIOUS ECONOMIC DEPRESSANT ON TROOP MORALE.

4. ICCS:

REGARDING THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR DEPLOYMENT OF ICCS GIO LINH PORT OF ENTRY TEAM IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE, THE PRG HAS MODIFIED ITS POSITION ON FREQUENCY OF RESUPPLY MISSIONS AND THE INDODEL IS READY TO DEPLOY CONDITIONALLY AND NEGOTIATE THE REMAINING ISSUES OF COMMUNICATION AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AFTER DEPLOYMENT. THAT

LEAVES ONLY THE CANDEL IN OPPOSITION; CONSEQUENTLY, WITH THEIR IMMINENT DEPARTURE, DEPLOYMENT TO GIO LINH APPEARS LIKELY SOON.

5. GVN AND PRG/NVA IN THE SONG VE VALLEY: DE FACTO COMPROMISE?
AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING IN MAY AND JUNE, GVN AND PRG/NVA FORCES IN
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THE UPPER SONG VE VALLEY OF QUANG NGAI PROVINCE (BS6054) APPEAR TO HAVE SETTLED FOR A DE FACTO COMPROMISE WHICH IS NOT ENTIRELY AGREEABLE TO EITHER. LOUDSPEAKER PROPAGANDA DUELS HAVE TAKEN THE PLACE OF FIGHTING. THE COMMUNISTS FOR THEIR PART HAVE PULLED BACK FROM THE ROAD WEST OF THE RIVER BETWEEN NGHIA HANH AND MINH LONG DISTRICT TOWNS ALLOWING TRAFFIC TO PASS UNMOLESTED. THE GVN NO LONGER OCCUPIES THE EAST BANK OF THE RIVER OPPOSITE THE ROAD, WHICH ALLOWS THE PRG UNHINDERED ACCESS THROUGH THE VALLEY INTO THE LOWLANDS. WHETHER THE COMPROMISE IS MORE THAN TEMPORARY, HOWEVER, REMAINS UNCERTAIN.

6. THE COMMUNISTS OF QUANG TRI:

SEVERAL VIET CONG BATTALIONS ARE REPORTED BY ARVN POW ESCAPEES TO BE ENGAGED IN REBUILDING ACTIVITIES IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE. TWO BATTALIONS, EACH OF ABOUT 200 PERSONNEL AND WITH A SOLID PROPORTION OF WOMEN, ARE FARMING JUST NORTH-NORTHEAST OF DONG HA (YD2661). FOUR OTHER BATTALIONS, OVER THREE-QUARTERS FEMALE, ARE REBUILDING HOUSES IN DONG HA.

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